

HELEN ELIZABETH HASTY

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Helen Elizabeth Hasty

(1888 -)

Miss Hasty came to Hawaii from Minnesota in 1915 to teach English and history at Punahou School. She later taught social studies and sewing and from 1948 until her retirement in 1953, was in charge of the study hall.

In her reminiscences, Miss Hasty recalls her early years at Punahou School and discusses the school's curriculum and evolution during her thirty-eight years there. She also mentions some of the students she remembers, some of the traditions and social activities at the school, and the camping trips she enjoyed at the Knudsen camp on Kauai during summer vacations.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

© 1979 The Watumull Foundation, Oral History Project
2051 Young Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96826

All rights reserved. This transcript, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without the permission of the Watumull Foundation.

INTERVIEW WITH HELEN ELIZABETH HASTY

At her Pohai Nani apartment, 45-090 Namoku St., Kaneohe 96744

In Autumn 1971

H: Helen Elizabeth Hasty

M: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

M: Okay. How you came to end up in Hawaii.

H: Well, Minneapolis is my native birthplace. Born in Minneapolis and came out here through friends that were here, Dr. and Mrs. [Wesley H.] Ketchum. And her sister and I were pals and so they invited us to come out and the two of us came. I got the job at Punahou--I had that before I left home--but she didn't have one, but she went into public school. (long pause)

M: What did you teach at Punahou?

H: Well, mostly social studies and English. I guess that was it.

M: Uh huh.

H: When I started in, we didn't call it social studies. What did we call it? History, I guess.

M: Hmm. History and English, then?

H: History and English, uh huh.

M: Where did you go to school?

H: Well, Minneapolis. I graduated there and then I went to . . .

M: University of Minneapolis or what?

H: No, I was in high school in Minneapolis and then I went to a Normal School up there--a state Normal School--and then I went, oh, I've been different places. The university there and Columbia University and I finally got my degree at Hawaii.

M: University of Hawaii.

H: Um hm.

M: I see.

H: So I've peddled around.

M: What were your parents' names, just for the record?

H: My parents' names? Well, my father was Ansel--A-N-S-E-L--Hasty and my mother was Laura--Laura Gay Hasty. Oh, that was funny. When I picked up the catalogue for Punahou before I first came and I saw the name Gay in the back, I thought, oh! do you suppose they're related! Well, I lived in the dormitory for twelve years and of course there were lots of the Gays and everybody else there. And the first time I saw one of the girls that was a Gay and here she was Hawaiian, I thought, boy, I'm not going to say anything about my (chuckles) family. But you know, after I got acquainted, why, it was a different story. It was so foreign to what I had anticipated.

M: Uh huh. The school was and all.

H: The Hawaiian. You know, I didn't--being--having the same name Gay. They were quite an island family though.

M: Yeh.

H: Do you know the Gays?

M: Well, I know one . . . family.

H: Do you know May? There's one of the Gays, Mrs. Stan--what's her name?--she lives up Manoa, up on . . . [Mary Helen Gay married Stanley Arthur Styan and has lived in Manoa]

M: No. The ones I knew were plantation people. They worked on the same plantation with my father-in-law, out at Ewa.

H: Well, originally most of these were.

M: Yeh, but I mean, until very recently they did.

H: Gays?

M: Frank Gay.

H: Oh, I don't know him. Lawrence Gay was one of our Punahou boys. He's quite a prominent man here in town. Lawrence

and May. [May Gay graduated from Punahou in 1919 and taught at the University of Hawaii for many years.] And then the girls, the rest of them were married to names I can't give. I'd have to look them up. And they came originally from the Island of Niihau. No. Niihau? Off from Maui. Is that Niihau? Yeh, plantation. Pineapple plantation. [Lanai is close to Maui; Niihau is close to Kauai. Lanai is noted for its pineapple production; Niihau is noted for its ranching. Gays have come from both Maui and Kauai.] Well, I don't think I have anything very interesting to tell you about myself.

M: Well, let's go on and just see what comes to mind. Why were you living in a dormitory?

H: Well, we had to when I first came. You see, I came in 1915 and that was--everybody lived in the dormitory. I mean, all the teachers. There was a women's dormitory and a men's.

M: Oh, so none of the teachers were married.

H: Oh, I suppose some of them were, I don't remember.

M: But they didn't live in the dorm if they were married, would they?

H: No, they wouldn't live in the dorm; and they didn't have the cottages on the campus that they have now, either. And the buildings that we had are all gone. I lived in Castle Hall. Well, Castle Hall has been converted into a classroom building now. And the men had what was called Dole Hall and the dining room was in Dole Hall. We all ate together. It was quite an experience for a person that hadn't had it.

M: I imagine so. How many women teachers did you live with?

H: Oh, I haven't any idea.

M: Well, you know, was it--there weren't hundreds of them that were there. A much smaller group than that.

H: No, the school was too small for that. I imagine that perhaps, in the dorm--let's see, we were on the third floor, most of us. Oh, perhaps twenty. In the dining room, we sat at a table for ten and we all had to take turns, a woman and a man, with the student tables, 'cause you see, it was boarding for students as well. And then we had a table, just back of them, and about ten at that. So, I imagine there were perhaps twenty of us.

M: I see. Did most of the students going to the school board there?

- H: If they came from the other islands, they boarded there.
- M: But you also had a lot of city . . .
- H: Huh?
- M: You also had a lot of . . .
- H: Local people, yes. Oh my yes. They made up the larger part of the school. Now you take Violet Austin Silva [Violet Dole Austin married Arthur L. Silverman], she came from one of the other islands, and she boarded there. That's when I first knew her. Harvey Hitchcock, who is the artist that we have, was a Punahou boy. You have to go some to find people that weren't Punahou or Kamehameha [Schools] . . . or else they were in the public school. The public schools were mostly these Orientals and other children, not the haoles [white people].
- M: Umm hmm. Well, there was McKinley [High School] at that time, in the way of a high school.
- H: McKinley was just getting started, as I remember, and that was. . . . Those were mostly Orientals. There were some haoles in there.
- M: Didn't Punahou, though . . .
- H: Not the Portuguese. Not the Portuguese. What?
- M: Didn't Punahou even then have that sort of ten percent quota thing?
- H: Nationality?
- M: Of Asians.
- H: Very soon. I can remember the first Oriental I had was a Chinese boy. The Chinese, of course, were here before the Japanese and they were more progressive. And they got away from the plantations as soon as they could and got into business. And then the Japanese came and in the meanwhile they had. . . . Then the Filipinos. And I remember the first Filipino girl. There weren't many Filipinos at Punahou and I meet this young lady once in awhile. I'm always happy to see her, but I can't tell you what her name was. She's happily married and successfully. I think they're a very progressive, modern family. But I don't know her name. Her father, I know, was sent here by the Japanese government to head the immigration department for all the Filipinos, so she came from a family that had a good back-

ground. They weren't what you'd call plantation people.

M: You mean he was sent here by the Philippine government.

H: Umm hmm.

M: Oh. I think you said Japanese government and that threw me for a minute.

H: Yeh, he was from the Philippines.

M: Yeh.

H: And his child was the first Filipino I had. Not very many Filipinos at Punahou, I don't think. Even in later years, I think they went to public school because by that time the public schools had got going and were better organized and so, could take care of them.

M: Umm hmm. (long pause) So you taught--at first anyway, you taught history and . . .

H: English.

M: English. What sort of a curriculum did you use, for instance, in English? Was that literature or was it mainly grammar or . . . ?

H: Pardon me?

M: What sort of a curriculum did you use for teaching English? Was it--did that mean, when you said English, did that mean grammar?

H: Grammar, yes. Grammar and composition and general.

M: Literature?

H: Yes.

M: The whole thing. What level was that?

H: Well, seventh, eighth, and ninth. Junior high school.

M: Umm hmm.

H: I didn't stay with that too long. I went mostly into social studies.

M: When did they start calling it social studies?

H: Oh, I don't know.

M: Well, when you started teaching social studies, was that still history?

H: Yes.

H: Or was that a combination of subjects?

H: Yes, it is as it is today. (long pause)

M: And you were teaching at the same grade?

H: Sometimes I had ninth. I taught ancient history in ninth grade and I taught world history in ninth grade, above the eighth grade level.

M: Umm hmm.

H: I never was--I didn't have seventh grade at all. I had eighth, ninth, tenth.

M: What level did they teach American history?

H: Well, American history is what you start out with in the lower grades. Then it was required, at one time, that you had to have a year of American history before you could graduate and that usually came in the senior year.

M: Oh I see. So you had a little of it and then you . . .

H: Well, you can go through it. They get their first background in general. The book is simpler than what they have in the senior and of course you handle it differently. I don't know. I don't know how they handle it now, but I had quite a leeway. It wasn't just memory-work--reading, discussing, going into various things. I have to laugh when I see this ad there is in the paper about helping people how to use the newspaper. Well, I did that too. Children brought newspapers and we looked, learned what was in them and how to read them, what to look for. (long pause) Ninth graders could do that.

And I had Hawaiian history too. I tried. I always say I tried to teach Hawaiian. I never felt very akamai [skillful] with the Hawaiian history because it was so foreign. It was entertaining and I learned an awful lot. There was some very fine people here that--they had a committee that wanted to have it taught there at Punahou, and I used to go with them to some of the most interesting meetings. We went out to Judge [Sanford Ballard] Dole's; we went to Prince Kuhio's house; and we went to, you know, a lot of these places that I wouldn't have had access to as just an individual, but I went with this group.

I never forget one night out at Judge Dole's. The man that used to be curator at the Bishop Museum was one and Joseph Emerson was another one. Well, those two men were not on speaking terms but Judge Dole was their host and they were discussing kahunas [expert practitioners in olden times], so they talked through Judge Dole. They wouldn't speak to each other but they'd talk to him and the discussion went on (Lynda laughs) in that area. It was a fascinating evening.

M: Did you ever find out what the problem was between the two of them?

H: No. No, I didn't. I think it was kind of a jealousy. You see, Joseph Emerson was quite an authority. The Emerson family, they were unique, you know.

M: I don't know them. I don't know the name at all.

H: Well, they're practically gone. I don't know whether Arthur Emerson's around or not. Arthur is of that family and he was an artist but he was queer as Dick's half-man. But the father was quite an intelligent man, I mean, and the mother was a medic graduate. She was a--I don't think she practiced medicine here but she was a graduate of the medical school.

M: And what did the father do for a living?

H: Oh, I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know what he did. I always think of him as a student of Hawaiian and of course he lived here so long. The family had come out here--I think his family, they came out here as missionaries originally. [The Reverend John S. and Mrs. Ursula Sophia Newell Emerson were members of the Fifth Company that arrived at Honolulu on May 17, 1832.]

Well anyway, very interesting outfit. Those were some of the interesting experiences I had with these contacts that I made.

M: Yeh. Well, what finally came of this committee and the history project? Did they finally get . . .

H: Oh, it gradually dropped out. Mr. [Arthur Floyd] Griffiths was the president [1902-1922] and he passed away and they didn't continue that course in that way. What they did then was to teach music down in the lower elementary school somewhere or another--Hawaiian--and gave them that approach to Hawaii. I don't know what they do now.

M: But they, at any rate, they quit teaching Hawaiian history as such.

- H: As such, uh huh. I think I was the only one that had that.
- M: You were at Punahou from 1915 then to . . .
- H: 1953.
- M: '53. Besides your teaching, what sort of things did you get involved with here? (pause)
- H: Such as what?
- M: Well, I mean any other organizations and groups, formal or informal, and activities.
- H: Oh, I don't know. (hardly audible) The last, I went into the study hall at Cooke Library, because I wanted to finish out so's I could get in on social security.
- M: Well, back in 1915 you lived in the dorm, you taught.
- H: Hmm?
- M: When you first came, you moved into the dormitory and you taught the two courses and ah . . .
- H: Then I moved out and lived in the city. We built a home, a friend and I, and I continued to teach. We changed--the organization of the school was changed and we had what we call When I went in, there was just the elementary and the high school. Well then, about--I don't know when it was, around 1919--let's see, I was away on sabbatical--and then they organized the junior high school. And then that moved, had its classes over in Dole Hall--(hardly audible) guess that's right--and we ate in Rice Hall. Yeh. So then my classes were all over in Dole Hall then. (long pause) [The Junior Academy was organized in 1918.]
- M: How did the school change over the years, do you feel?
- H: How does it . . . ?
- M: How did the school change or . . . ?
- H: How did they change?
- M: I mean, what--did you get any big differences from when you came, other than just the size, of course.
- H: Oh of course! Evolution, yes.
- M: You got bigger and more buildings and all, but in the kind

of students you had or the kind of classes or the way things were taught.

- H: Well, naturally, naturally. You have to keep changing. You have to keep evolving. You don't keep the same old pattern all the way. Nobody does. You don't do that at home. We don't live that way. It's just natural evolution. They decided to have the department or the administration would decide to have this or that.
- M: But I mean the kind of students that you had in your classes. Did you see any changes there in the kind of student; his approach to his work or his general sophistication when he came to you or things of that nature?
- H: Well, I don't know. It was general involvement and natural. There was the opportunity. We had more opportunities put in. Courses, changes in courses, and changes in approach. (long pause) I don't know. What would you say?
- M: I don't know. I wasn't there. (laughs)
- H: No, but what was your experience as a growing student? Didn't you see a change in your--or you didn't realize you were going through a change?
- M: Not really, not as a student. You just, up to a point, take what's given to you. I was thinking of, from your point of view as a teacher and adult. Ah . . . (long pause) What I'm trying to elicit is some kind of--umm, maybe, things you remember about the students you had. Ah, the kind of people they were or ah . . .
- H: Well, just as the population changes and as families change, so the student body did. (pause) I don't--I don't--I can't say a difference in personality. Is that what you're thinking about?
- M: Um hmm, or whatever. Ah (long pause), well, (pause) maybe there's not much of anything there to pursue . . .
- H: Ah, we had lots of army people, you see, and our student body was made up of the army people, the other islands' children--plantation children, we'll say--but they're all haoles, all white children. Then eventually we had some Orientals (long pause) and some Portuguese. They're two kinds of Portuguese here, you know. They're not all the same. There're two elements of Portuguese here though. Some came as missionaries that didn't come from the Madeira Islands. The laborers came from the Madeira Islands and they were the lower class of Portuguese. Then there was an

upper class of Portuguese that came from the mainland [United States]. They were--came as missionaries and there were some people here now, I know one of my very best friends --well, Judge [Antonio] Perry was one of our court judges. He was of the upper class.

M: Yeh, I know the Perry family.

H: And that--so the students we would have--most of our children were not so much of the plantation-working class, 'cause they couldn't afford to come, for one thing. And then they started schools out in the country--the public schools spread--and that took care of a lot of these people. So the personnel there would not be affected by . . .

M: So you really had sort of the cream of the crop in the way of students.

H: Yes. Of course you know they had to qualify. They had to pass examinations to get in. We just didn't take everybody that applied. They had to--they were selected (pause) and the alumni children always had preference if they could pass the examinations. They took standard tests. (pause)

M: They were doing that way back when you first came?

H: Oh yes. Well, the tests didn't come in at the beginning. I mean these psychological tests that didn't come in at the beginning, but they checked the children. We didn't have to worry. There weren't . . .

M: Why?

H: There wasn't the element that wanted to come in. We had the army children and the island whites--plantation whites, and . . . excuse me (sneezes). Well, that was hard. (Lynda chuckles) We didn't have to do the same kind of choosing that we do now.

M: Umm hmm.

H: (coughs) (it is difficult to determine who speaks next and what is said) To me there's hurry (?).

M: You mean there's hurry (?). In a sense, you just . . . (recorder is turned off and on again)

H: And of course then, they started in the public schools--they started, for awhile there, distinguishing the English-speaking [children] and the children that were less fluent in English. And Roosevelt High School was the first one in the public schools. [She is probably referring to what

were known as Standard English-speaking schools, attended by children who spoke standard English fluently in their homes. There were other schools for those children who spoke non-standard or pidgin-English because their parents usually spoke a foreign language in the home.]

Well, as soon as Roosevelt was established and they took white children there--took children with the English ability--then our competition was different, 'cause there were a lot of people that couldn't afford Punahou that would go to public school, as long as there was one available that was good. Some professor from Columbia [University] came out and helped them to get this English Standard School established, as they called it, and that was public. So then that made a difference in our personnel. (long pause)

Some of my most interesting experiences were at camp. I camped up on the Island of Kauai up at Kokee for thirteen different summers and we had tents and the Knudsen family were our sponsors up there. Do you know . . . ?

M: When you say WE, do you mean . . . ?

H: Well, this club that I--we--belong to, a club of women. And one of the Knudsen men, Augustus Knudsen, had had the boys up there and he wanted to see if women could camp like boys could, so he said he'd furnish tents and he'd see that we got our food, 'cause we were twenty-some miles from port. We had to go up on horseback and we took our bedding in gunny sacks and they had it fastened on the side of the horses. And the Knudsens sent down a guide and the horses and met us at the boat, and then we rode this twenty miles up to camp.

At first, we had just--we didn't have any--well, we didn't have any floors, we just had a tent, and we cooked outdoors and we had to carry our water up from one stream and we had another stream we called Nymphs' Retreat, where we did our bathing, and we had a wonderful time. And this Augustus, as well as his brother Eric--they both are gone now--was our chief sponsor and those were wonderful. And the hikes up around there. You know, we'd take our lunches and we'd go places where we'd take a towel and a bathing cap and go in swimming. It was the life.

M: I'll bet. When was this, when you first started doing that?

H: I went up there--the first year I went there was in 1916. I was up there I don't know how many different summers. Thirteen summers, not every summer in succession. And our group of women, some were teachers; some of them were business girls; some of them only would have two weeks up

there and some could stay a month or more. It depends upon how much vacation they had. It was a pretty good life.

And the Knudsens, especially Augustus, when he'd have the boys come up--they had a separate camp over quite a ways from our place--they'd hunt goat and pig--wild goat and wild pig--and then they'd bring us over some of it, so we'd have pot roast of goat or pot roast of pig (Lynda laughs), 'cause we had to cook everything outside. We had a wood stove. We had to get our own wood, haul that in and saw it to fit into our fireplace that we had, rock and so on.

M: Is that what you cooked on, was just sort of a stone fireplace? A stove.

H: Well, yes, it was, just crude. We got grates finally and put it with a top to put our kettles on and we had the kettle tree--a tree right nearby where we hung all our [pots and pans]. Then later on, as time went on--you see, all this property had been given to the Knudsens way back--their family--and when that expired in 1920, their lease expired so then it went to the territory. So then the Territory [of Hawaii] decided to assert its authority, so they came up and then we couldn't swim in the stream anymore because the plantation was using the water down below for cultivating. But we couldn't swim in the stream so then we put in a shower. We piped water up from the stream--the other stream--for our drinking water and then we had this shower and, believe me, that was cold.

M: I'll bet.

H: You know what mountain-stream swimming is. So, I don't know. Eventually we had floors. We had to have mosquito nets. We made our beds by picking the fern--certain kind of fern--and when it wasn't too ripe, too dry, put it into And we'd carry up a mattress case, like a big pillow case, and fill that with the fern leaves and that's what we slept on, on an army cot. But we didn't have that at first but we evolved and we improved (Lynda laughs)

M: Did you . . . ?

END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

H: We did no paying as far as the Knudsens were concerned, except that they got food for us and brought it up. They had built--(traffic noise) they had a cart with wooden wheels. You see, there were no trails really. Most everything was on horseback but they did have this wagon. They'd haul food up every so often. And I thought I would die at

first--no bread, no butter, you know, things of that sort --but you get so you don't need it. We had cases of hard tack. You know what that saloon pilot is?

M: Umm hmm.

H: And cases of crackers.

M: What kind of meat did you have, except for the fresh meat you . . . ?

H: Well, when they'd give us fresh meat. Well, we'd take up ham and some canned. At that time, there was a Chinaman, Ah Leong, down on King Street--lower King--and he spread way out on the sidewalk. He just carried everything. He had awfully good jam from Australia. And we used to go down to him and put in an order for the whole summer, or practically, and he would ship it up to us up there and then the Knudsens would haul it up the trail, of course.

M: I see.

H: We couldn't have had camp without them.

M: Where did they actually live? They didn't live up in Kokee.

H: Well, they were plantation people. They were down at Kekaha, down on the lowlands, but they had this summer place up there at Halemanu where the Erik Knudsen family lived. And then Augustus was a widower by this time. He had a daughter that was in college and he was divorced from his wife and so he just had a cabin up there over in the track. (long pause)

I went back to the mainland about every two years on account of my family and we usually went up on the Canadian-Australian boats, because we liked those better than we did the Matson [Navigation Company] boats, and that would take us up to Vancouver--Victoria--then I'd go across, you see, to Minneapolis where my family lived.

M: By train or something?

H: Umm hmm.

M: Did any of the rest of your family ever come out to Hawaii?

H: My mother, my sister, and one of my nephews--grandnephew, and just last year a grandniece was out here.

M: Not to live though.

H: Oh no. Oh no.

M: None of them to live. (recorder is turned off and on again)
. . .of nowhere.

H: Well, I don't know. I guess they didn't worry about it.

M: You had brothers or sisters or no?

H: I have one sister and two brothers.

M: 1915 that was kind of a daring thing to do.

H: Hmm?

M: That was, you know, not every single girl took off for an island somewhere.

H: No. No. Well, the two of us came together, you see. This friend that I had here, Mrs. Ketchum and her husband who was an M.D. here, had written back for her sister and me to come. Well, she sent us application blanks from Punahou and we filled them out. My friend, Jo, was a primary teacher. Well, the report came there was no vacancy for her but there was for me and Mr. Arthur Alexander, who was on the board [of trustees], sent me a cable about Christmastime, wanting me to come. Well, I couldn't come in the middle of the year. I phoned down to my mother--I wasn't at home then--and, my land, no, I couldn't. She wouldn't think of me coming out here, you know. Well then, when I went home in the summer, why, I fixed it up so that I did come in September.

M: Hmm. Well, how old were you?

H: Oh, in my twenties, early twenties. I've forgotten. Twenty-one or something like that.

M: Oh, I see. You weren't just a teenager at that point.

H: Huh?

M: You weren't a teenager at that point.

H: No. No. No.

M: Had you been teaching then? Before you went?

H: I . . . Yeh. I had a couple of years of teaching before I came out here.

M: Was the quality of the faculty at Punahou, when you first

came, very good would you say?

H: Yes! Yes, they're all college-trained. Oh yes.

M: They had no trouble getting good people apparently, huh?

H: No. (long pause) And most of--you see, in those days, more so than now, most of the girls and boys went east to college, they didn't go to California, although when I first started to teach, I was so surprised. Most of the kids here thought California was the whole United States. You talk about going to the United States, well, it was California. That's all they knew in the early years. I mean most of them thought, although 'course I had kids in classes that their parents were working in rubber plantations down in India and the West Indies, but the families were there and the kids were up here in the boarding department at Punahou, going to school. I know we had a Waterhouse boy, I think of right off. His folks were down there and there were other people, the families were down there and the kids were here.

M: That must have been hard on the children in some ways, huh?

H: Yes, I think so.

M: To be so far from their families at that early age.

H: They didn't know what home life was.

M: Um hmm. Would they go home in the summer? I mean, would they go down there?

H: Hmmm, I don't remember, whether they did or not. (pause) But rubber was the industry then, more than cane, that they were interested in down there. Nowadays of course, we send our people overseas for everything, not so much to the Orient as to the, well, the Far East--Iran and Arabia and places like that's where we send our experts--and Australia, the undeveloped areas. (long pause)

M: Can you remember any other experiences with teachers or students or whatever?

H: I beg your pardon?

M: Can you remember any other experiences that are particularly striking that you had, either as a teacher or . . . ?

H: Well, when I came here, of course, I didn't know any plants, and one year there was a student here whose father was an

artist from Yosemite and she had curiosity about the plants and the flowers. What were they? Well, I'd ask some of the students, you know, in the class. No, they didn't know what it was. And most of the teachers in the dormitory were much older than I was and I enjoyed the kids more than I did them, so we formed a hiking club and we decided we'd go out and learn what the vegetation was.

First, we went onto our own campus. We had a man there that was head gardener and so on, Mr. [Frank] Barwick, who was from Kew Gardens in England, you know, and he had been shipwrecked here as a young chap. And so, he knew all the trees on the campus. Campus wasn't like it is now. They've had some beautiful trees and we had some buildings but we didn't have them as it is. So, this group--I think there were about a dozen of us--let him tell us about the trees on the campus.

Then we went down--there was a--can't think what the man's name was--it was down at the agricultural department, state agriculture. The building is still down there. They still run it. I don't know who's head now. On King Street. You remember? Were you here when they had the big argument about the banyan tree?

M: Umm hmm.

H: Well, that area in through there. So we went down to that man and he was very helpful in helping us identify. So after we got a little background for it, then we'd go off on hikes every two weeks. And each person was to try to find some plant or piece of vegetation that he hadn't known before, come home, investigate, identify it, and then we'd have a group together and they'd tell. Well, some of the kids made notebooks; some of them had waxed the leaves; and they did different things that they wanted to--whatever they wanted--and that way we all learned. That's the way I learned the trees and plants and flowers (Lynda chuckles) from this island. And I enjoyed that hiking and I enjoyed those kids. They were all, oh, thirteen, fourteen years old, you know. They were good company and I enjoyed them more than I did a lot of the older people in the building.

M: Were most of the other teachers from the mainland, like yourself?

H: I guess so. Some of them were island. Florence Carter was an island woman. Charlotte Dodge was--she wasn't born here but she grew up here from babyhood. Her father was on the--worked for Kamehameha School in the business office in some capacity. I don't know just what. She graduated from Smith [College for women] and came back and taught at Puna-hou. And Florence Carter, I think--we used to have an old

Normal School here. [Territorial Normal School]

M: Um hm. I've heard a lot about that Normal School. Seems like so many . . . (recorder goes off and on again)

H: College.

M: College of Hawaii, I think, yeh. [Now the University of Hawaii]

H: Yeh. I know the women, when we people all belonged to what we called the College Club, instead of the AAUW [American Association of University Women], which is a national, (door bell rings) but we had a College Club. Excuse me.

M: Um hm.

H: My foot goes to sleep and then I have to watch I don't fall and break it. (to person at the door) Yes. (they converse and recorder is turned off and on again)

M: Two more things I wanted to ask you and one was: Was the turnover in faculty very great when you were first . . . ?

H: At Punahou?

M: Um hm. Did people tend to come here and stay or were they coming back and forth from the mainland? I'm just curious.

H: I don't think there was a uniform turnover. I think some, like myself, stayed a long while. I know once a year, before this president came, when they'd have in the spring--they'd have sort of a party and they would honor, at that time, the people who had been there a long while or who were retiring. And each year there would be, oh I don't know, perhaps two or three retiring or somebody who would be going--leaving--who had been there a long while, who was taking another job or giving up teaching and doing something else. But in general I think they lasted pretty well. I mean, stayed on.

M: Um hm. How much--you don't have to answer this if you don't want to, but I'm just curious . . .

H: How much what?

M: If you don't want to answer, don't. How much did you make when you first came?

H: Ho ho! I think I had eight hundred dollars.

M: A year?

H: A year, and I boarded at the dorm and I paid something like twenty-three dollars a month for my room and board. We had a laundry--a Chinese fellow on the campus that did our laundry--and we furnished our own. Here, we don't furnish anything. I mean, bedding. We don't furnish our bedding and they do that. That goes with the rent. But I know I marveled--I think it cost me something like \$1.25 a month for my linen, what they washed and ironed. Linen and towels. I didn't do my personal. That would be extra, though I could have them do it. Oh, everything was cheap those days. We used to have a Japanese dressmaker, a man we'd go to. He was down in what we call Palama. To you, that would be down where Liliha Street goes in.

M: Yeh, I know where that is.

H: There was a Japanese man that made our white dresses for \$2.25. We wore white practically all the while.

M: Why was that?

H: It was cooler.

M: Cooler.

H: And we didn't have--well, we had fashions, yes, and for a formal, we bought this peanut cloth. You know the Japanese --er, Filipino peanut cloth?

M: Oh, yeh.

H: It's kind of stiff; it's kind of lacy; it's kind of, well--we don't have

M: I know what it is.

H: You know what it is. I remember having a very formal--and we'd wear formals. We had to dress for dinner on Thursday nights and Sunday nights. We had to dress especially, put on a, you know, formal more or less. And we used to have Calling Days, one day a week--ah, one day a month. Now our Punahou calling day was Monday. Manoa would have some other day and people would save [that day] and they'd call. And when it was calling day--ours, for instance, down at Punahou--we had to come down to the parlor in Castle Hall and be all dressed up to receive the people who came to call from the community. And . . .

M: This is one day a month?

H: One day a month. And you knew which day, where to go on

the right day, and I remember, when they'd come--'course I suppose we had something like refreshments. I don't know what it would be. I don't know what we had for refreshments in those days. Tea and toast, I suppose. (laughs) But anyhow, we'd have tea likely. And they'd bring their cards and if it was for a particular person, why, there'd only be one card and that would be given for that Miss Jones; but if it was for general, for all of us, why then, they'd fold their card and then we all were obligated.

Well, there's one lady here in town and you don't know her and she's out of your range anyhow now. She's--I don't know where she's living. But she was a very aristocratic, formal sort of person and you never just knew what she was going to say or do. She had two girls and a boy at Punahou and this particular time she came down and made her call and we had some new teachers and they thought it was the courteous thing to pay it back. So they hired a taxi--people didn't have cars like they have now--and went up to her house and rang the door bell and she came to the door and they introduced themselves. "Oh," she said, "I never thought I'd ever see you again." (laughs) Well, these girls were rather shocked and they said, "Let's dismiss the taxi and go home." (Lynda laughs) And that was it.

But we used to have lots of funny experiences with these people around here. Some of them were very formal and gracious; some of them were formal and ungracious, shall I say. You know.

M: Uh huh.

H: I don't know. Lots of them had queer ideas about some of the teachers. They felt they were just a little below them, you know, socially.

M: Um hm. Well, that's true though, isn't it? Teachers in those days were considered . . . (recorder goes off and on again)

H: I was in a Scandinavian town up in northern Minnesota. What state are you from?

M: Oregon.

H: Well, you had lots of Scandinavians up there too, didn't you?

M: Um hm.

H: In the early days, lumbering.

M: Um hm.

H: I love Oregon. I think it's one of the prettiest states. I just love it.

M: I think so too.

H: Well anyway, we were in this small town and this lady came to call on us. I think it was my first teaching job and I'd never been away from home, you know, and this very formal, important member of the community came to call on us and she said, "Vell, how youse still tank you like yourself in this town?" (laughter) So that's the way I feel: "Vell, how youse still tank you like yourself?" Oh boy. I'll tell you, you have lots of experiences.

I grew up in the city and I didn't have any of that. I didn't know country people. I didn't know--well, you know, it was just different. I went to a big public school, one school after another. I went, maybe, to one until I was in the seventh grade and then I had to go to another one for eighth--seventh and eighth--and then to high school. Well you know, it was a big area--Minneapolis is quite a city and it was then--and so I didn't have a lot of these funny experiences.

Then another one of them. One place, we had a--we were in this boarding house and they were all Scandinavian. This same town. That town was a humdinger and quite an experience for me. I'm not Scandinavian. I hope you're not. (Lynda laughs) I don't mean to be offensive, but this woman said--something happened; I don't know what happened--she said, "You smile my face and you talk on my back." (laughter) That's one of our pet phrases. Oh dear, I'll tell you . . .

M: When you were out here at Punahou at first, were the parents coming to sort of inspect the teachers? Was that the idea? When they'd come on this Calling Day?

H: It was just part of the social program.

M: Hmm. Well, did you have other opportunities to meet parents and so forth or was that sort of it?

H: Well, they'd come. I had one parent who came and she said, "My daughter has invited me to be her guest today. Do you mind?" So I said, "Why no, come in and sit down."

M: Where was this, in the classroom?

H: In the classroom.

M: Oh.

- H: And we had special teachers for special work. Now for instance, this woman that was in there was teaching oral expression and she was teaching them something. I don't know what now. This woman--this parent--sat in the back of the room and, when this teacher told them to say it thus--or-so, this woman--this guest--said, "That's not the right way to do it." (Lynda chuckles) She says, "I know how to do it." She says, "Why, I went to"--oh, some school--"Emerson School." And the teacher said, "Well, I did too, only I think a few years later." Oh! I was embarrassed to death, to have all this before the kids.
- M: Yeh, the kids probably loving it! (laughs)
- H: Oh boy. But you know, the people kind of felt that they owned the place. They could just speak up.
- M: Uh huh. Uh huh.
- H: They didn't go to a P.T.A. [Parent-Teacher Association] and air their feelings. I don't know whether they had P.T.A.'s in those days. Not in the very beginning, I don't think.
- M: I don't think they did. ["In 1908, the National Congress of Mothers changed its name to include parent-teacher associations, and in 1915 a new charter was secured Associations have been organized in every state, in Alaska, and Hawaii." Lincoln Library, 1928] (recorder is turned off and on again)
- H: . . . disliked and all, like they are here now. Oh, I'll tell you, the experiences that we have are unusual I think. (traffic noise)
- M: Did the fathers ever come around and meet, or was this mainly a lady thing?
- H: Not often. Never, never, not during the day. No, I don't think--we just--if we met them, it was casually.
- M: Was this calling done after school hours then?
- H: That calling, like that afternoon tea I was telling about, well, that was an afternoon report. Monday afternoon, that would be. They were all dressed up and we were too.
- M: So you didn't have classes that afternoon.
- H: Well, you see, school closed at 2:30 p.m.

M: Oh, I see. So it's after that.

H: After that, I suppose. I never thought about that.

M: Hmm. (pause) Did that go on for a number of years?

H: I don't know when it went out. It died a natural death sometime or another. (Lynda laughs)

M: I can't quite imagine it. It's like something from another age entirely, you know.

H: Well, you can't imagine what It was an aristocratic school and these people tried to carry on, you know, as they supposed. And most of our parents were college--were in those days--college graduates. Mainland. (long pause) I don't know.

M: Did you ever get invited to students' homes and that sort of thing?

H: Oh yes. Yes, yes. Oh, there were some that were very social and very thoughtful and kind and they'd bring me the things to eat at school. Somebody'd make a nice cake or a nice piece of pie and bring it, you know. I mean, they were--there was a general social relationship, but then you do have some of these But they aren't so much now. I don't know about that Mrs. Whatever-Her-Name was, now. I don't know how she is. She sees me and she used to invite me.

Now, the benefit parties given down, we'll say, down at--the Moana was THE hotel in those days, and she'd give me two tables. There was prizes and cards and everything. This same woman that I told you the story about. You know, she wasn't all queer, (laughs) except that she was nice to me. And we had quite a good deal of social life that they'd help out with.

M: [What] was the benefit party all about?

H: Oh, I don't know.

M: Was that a fund-raising thing for something?

H: I suppose so. They still do things like that but Oh, they were good to us; I mean, some of us. Now Mrs. John Waterhouse, who has passed away, her husband was president of A & B [Alexander & Baldwin Company] for years and years. Her family was a big stockholder in A & B. She was a Waterhouse, but by--I think she belonged to the Alexander family. [John Waterhouse married Martha Alexander]

And they were wealthy people and they had a beautiful home up on Tantalus, for those days. And each Christmas or holiday, she'd invite me to use her house and I know the first time we went up, there were fourteen beds available and there was a servant that came in and started--we had a kitchen stove, a wood stove--and they'd come in and they'd wash our dishes and all that sort of thing. And we'd have that for the Christmas holiday, for the week, you know, to go up there and we'd have big Christmas parties or house parties.

M: You'd have the run of the whole place to yourself.

H: We'd have, yes. And there, your servant knew that he was supposed to come in. Anything we wanted, we'd ask him. Lots of times we wouldn't want him and we'd tell him not to bother coming. But we had this great big fireplace. Oh, it was a beautiful, great big room. It was more fun. We'd have parties, you know, bridge parties and so on, and invite our friends.

But I remember the first night we went up there and we found fourteen beds. We made out slips--we didn't know where anybody wanted to sleep, so we put this name under this bed and that name under there (Lynda laughs), then when they'd find out where their bed was, then they'd go up and they'd all change them. (laughter) Well, that was all right. We didn't care about that. It was just to get things going, you know, to make a break. Get something going.

M: So this was a whole crowd of teachers that would go up there.

H: Yeh. Yeh, but we could have mixed parties, you know, after. We didn't have them there at the house--I mean, not for overnight. We had mixed parties in an evening or whenever we wanted them. I remember we were up there a spring vacation, I think it was. We were all sitting at the table for a meal--I don't know what--and the telephone rang and word had come about one of our friends down in Honolulu who had got married and she married somebody that we didn't --oh, we couldn't see it. And the yell that went up, to think that she'd marry that fellow. (laughter) Well, you know, everything was just free and easy. (pause) She's still around town but I think she got divorced. (long pause) No, I've had a lot of fun here. Some very best friends I had I made at camp.

END OF SIDE 2/1ST TAPE

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen, May 1979

RE: Calling Days at Punahou: Sunday Advertiser, 8/6/1911;
The Calling Days, so-called by Miss Hasty, are blocked
in a rectangle and head the Society Page. The days,
the schools, and the times are listed, beginning with
Monday: Punahou.

RE: The Parent-Teachers' Association: Star-Bulletin, 3/5/1941;
Article on page 3 about the 25th anniversary of the
founding of Punahou's P.T.A.

NOTE: The Fort Street English Day School was started by the
Reverend Maurice B. Beckwith in 1865. Later it was
called the Fort Street School, then renamed Honolulu
High School, and eventually became McKinley High School
when a new stone building was built on the corner of
Beretania and Victoria streets in 1907. McKinley High
School was still the only public high school in Honolulu
in 1916. (See page 4)

Subject Index

- 1 - 2 Background and education
 Dr. and Mrs. Wesley H. Ketchum
- 2 - 3 Ansel and Laura Gay Hasty
 May, Frank and Lawrence Gay
 Mary Helen Gay (Mrs. Stanley A. Styan)
- 3 - 4 Castle Hall, women's dormitory
 Dole Hall, men's dormitory
 and dining room
 Student boarders
- 4 - 5 Violet Dole Austin (Mrs. Arthur L. Silverman)
 Harvey Hitchcock
 Kamehameha Schools
 McKinley High School
 Nationality quota at Punahou
- 5 - 6 English curriculum, 1915
 Social studies, junior high school
 World, American and Hawaiian history
- 6 - 7 Levels of study and requirements
 Teaching methods: early use of newspapers
- 7 - 8 Sanford Ballard Dole
 The missionary Emerson family

- 7 - 8 Joseph and Arthur Emerson
Hawaiian music courses
- 8 - 9 Cooke Library study hall, 1948-53
Junior Academy, Dole Hall, 1918
Rice Hall, dining room
The evolution of Punahou School
- 9 - 10 The Punahou student body
- 10 - 11 Judge Antonio Perry
Qualification examinations
Roosevelt High School
English Standard Schools
- 11 - 14 The Knudsen's Camp, Kauai
Augustus and Eric Knudsen
Ah Leong's store
- 14 - 15 The Ketchums
Arthur Alexander
Quality of the Punahou faculty
- 15 - 17 The Waterhouse family
Study of horticulture; hiking club
Frank Barwick, grounds superintendent
Florence Carter; Charlotte P. Dodge
- 17 - 18 Faculty turnover at Punahou
Starting salary and expenses, 1915
- 18 - 22 Calling Days at Punahou
Parent-teacher relationships
Parent-Teacher Association, founded 1916

22 - 24 Social activities

Martha Alexander (Mrs. John Waterhouse)

Holidays at Waterhouse's Tantalus home

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.